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Chairman: Mr. MONGBE (Benin)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 104: HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT (continued)

Draft resolution concerning developing human resources for development (A/C.2/48/L.9)

1. Mr. Rodolfo JARAMILLO (Colombia), introducing draft resolution A/C.2/48/L.9 on behalf of the sponsors, read out the following new paragraph 3 which had inadvertently been omitted from the original text.

> "Reaffirms the importance of women and youth in human resources development and, in this context, welcomes the International Conference on Women to be held in Beijing in 1995 and the proposal adopted by the Commonwealth Heads of Government to convene a Summit on Youth on an agreed date".

AGENDA ITEM 95: INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT (A/48/94, A/48/182-S/26108, A/48/272, A/48/291-S/26242, A/48/309, A/48/338, A/48/353-S/26372, A/48/359, A/48/445-S/26501, A/48/484-S/26552, A/C.2/48/4)

(a) IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COMMITMENTS AND POLICIES AGREED UPON IN THE DECLARATION ON INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION, IN PARTICULAR THE REVITALIZATION OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES (A/48/505)

(b) IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FOR THE FOURTH UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT DECADE

2. Mr. WIDYONO (Director, Regional Commissions New York Office), speaking on behalf of the five regional commissions, introduced the report of the Secretary-General on regional economic integration among developing countries (A/48/505), which had been prepared in response to General Assembly resolution 46/145. Citing paragraphs 2-4 of that resolution he noted that chapter II of the report provided detailed references to measures included in specific subprogrammes of the medium-term plan for the period 1994-1997 regarding the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the Economic Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA).

3. Chapter III described the steps taken to integrate specific programmes on economic integration in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995. Chapter IV detailed the joint UNCTAD/regional commissions undertakings for the identification, preparation and implementation of specific projects to facilitate economic cooperation, while chapter V provided a detailed account of the activities carried out by each of the organizations in that important field.

4. Progress in that area could not be achieved without increased extrabudgetary resources to finance projects for the development of regional infrastructures, production and trade among developing countries; such resources had been dwindling. The Committee might find it necessary to call on bilateral

(Mr. Widyono)

and multilateral sources to give favourable consideration to funding for economic integration projects.

5. Mr. Luis Fernando JARAMILLO (Colombia), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and the People's Republic of China, said that the auspicious international environment that had witnessed the adoption in 1990 of the Declaration on International Economic Cooperation and of the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade - both of which called for accelerated development of the third world, renewed world economic growth and greater international cooperation - had changed drastically. The war in the Persian Gulf, the serious economic repercussions of the dissolution of the European socialist bloc and the recession of the past few years in the countries of the North had wreaked havoc in the international economy. Even the most optimistic estimates anticipated that economic growth would be sluggish, and that no new jobs would be created. The current world economic situation cast a shadow on the future of the Declaration and the Strategy, while the absence of coordinated policies and measures to stimulate the world economy continued to reveal a lack of political will in the industrialized nations to fulfil their commitments.

6. The Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations, perhaps the most important issue on the multilateral agenda, remained deadlocked, owing to the inability of some of the principal actors to overcome their intransigence and resolve their bilateral disputes. Protectionist measures had intensified in the industrialized countries and new trade barriers had emerged. Official development assistance had remained stagnant and the debt problem continued to impede economic growth and development in many countries. The developing countries could not understand the lack of political will demonstrated by the developed nations to solve the debt problem, particularly that burdening the least developed countries and the countries of sub-Saharan Africa. Increased trade and fair prices for third world exports were as important as official development assistance for the economic future of the developing countries, yet commodity prices and terms of trade had continued to deteriorate. Moreover, poverty, unemployment, frustration and hopelessness had become more acute and had provoked social and political consequences in many countries.

7. In contrast, the developing countries had fully fulfilled their commitments through policies aimed at the structural transformation of their economies, often at a high political and social cost. In view of the absence of reciprocity in the industrialized world, there was a danger that the reforms undertaken by the developing countries might be wasted, raising the possibility that economic destabilization would lead to the collapse of many new democracies. The increasing globalization of economic relations and the current international context called for a new discussion of the Declaration and the Strategy from the perspective of the forthcoming agenda for development. The industrialized countries must recognize that the sustained growth of their economies also depended on the stability and growth of the third world. The Declaration and the Strategy would result in true economic and social progress for the developing countries only if the industrialized countries committed themselves to concerted global action and to policies conducive to sustainable and equitable development.

8. Mr. PETERS (Belgium), speaking on behalf of the European Community and its member States, said that the importance of human development, the fight against poverty, the liberalization of international trade and national responsibility for development had become increasingly clear. The rapid political, economic and social changes under way called for a redefinition of the concept of development, particularly in light of the increased importance now attached to sustainable development, the link between population and development, the social aspects of development and the redefinition of the role of the United Nations in the field of international economic cooperation.

9. The delegations on whose behalf he was speaking welcomed the careful attention being paid at the highest levels of the Secretariat to the elaboration of the agenda for development, which should be a practical document. The agenda should not seek to renegotiate existing texts, but should serve as a guide defining the consensus of the international community on the key pillars of development and the role of the United Nations in that regard. The task of preparing the agenda provided an unprecedented opportunity for the United Nations to enhance its credibility as an agent of international development, in line with its new credibility in the political and peace-keeping spheres. The agenda should be able to mobilize public opinion on behalf of international cooperation for development, and the various actors in the process should therefore contribute to its elaboration.

10. Development was a vast undertaking that included activities in a number of disciplines, which were carried out both by Governments and by the private sector, non-governmental organizations, local communities and scientific circles. In that regard, it was important to distinguish clearly which tasks should be carried out at the intergovernmental level to promote economic and social development, and which other tasks should be pursued at the national level.

11. Intergovernmental cooperation had resulted in a number of recent instruments, such as Agenda 21, the Cartagena Commitment and the Vienna Declaration. Those documents should be taken into consideration in the preparation of the agenda for development, as should the preparations for the International Conference on Population and Development, the World Summit for Social Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women. The agenda for development should remove the artificial distinction between economic development and social progress.

12. The European Community and its member States were pleased that the concept of human development included both social and economic indicators, since the development process comprised economic growth, social progress and the sound management of public affairs. As the Vienna Declaration had emphasized, democracy, development and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms were interdependent and mutually reinforcing.

13. Mr. PIRIZ-BALLON (Uruguay), speaking on behalf of the countries members of the Southern Cone Common Market (MERCOSUR), namely Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay, said that, in the three years following the General Assembly's adoption of the Declaration on International Economic Cooperation and the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade, the developed countries had not only continued to pursue their previous

(Mr. Piriz-Ballon, Uruguay)

economic policies but by failing to understand current realities, had aggravated international economic problems. The efforts of the seven most developed economies to solve their internal crises, unemployment and recession with short-term measures and forced maintenance of the status quo, had had an adverse impact on the developing countries. Such solutions were short-sighted since the developing countries were not growing and their markets were unable to absorb the products of the developed countries.

14. While the countries members of MERCOSUR and other developing countries were complying with paragraph 23 of the Declaration on International Economic Cooperation by taking measures, at great social and political cost to themselves, to control inflation, modernize their economies and increase their competitiveness, the developed countries were not doing anything to correct existing external and fiscal imbalances and, in contravention of paragraph 22 of the Declaration, were unwilling to make their markets more accessible. The Governments that controlled 80 per cent of the world economy should adopt measures that not only solved their own problems but also benefited the developing countries.

15. The Uruguay Round, the longest multilateral trade negotiations in history, was about to conclude without any positive results for the developing countries, particularly those with a large agricultural sector. Many African countries that had been self-sufficient in the area of food production were currently totally dependent on subsidized products from the European Community. While the African countries received assistance for the revitalization of their agricultural sector, that sector was faced with unfair competition from subsidized products. That situation was detrimental not only to exporting countries but also to countries that could be self-sufficient and maintain competitive agricultural sectors.

16. In his report on regional economic integration among developing countries (A/48/505), the Secretary-General noted that the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the regional commissions had included in their revised medium-term plans specific programmes and/or sectoral activities for the promotion of regional economic integration. The countries of MERCOSUR believed that such positive activities should be increased through enhanced coordination and joint undertakings of UNCTAD and the regional commissions in that field.

17. Mr. PANKIN (Russian Federation) noting that the Declaration on International Economic Cooperation and the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade had served as the basis, inter alia, for the Rio Declaration and Agenda 21 expressed the hope that the Secretary-General would take due account of their principal ideas in preparing the agenda for development and the International Development Strategy. A considerable number of States' obligations under the Declaration dealt with the application of the principles and approaches contained in it in the preparation and implementation of national policies for social and economic development.

18. His delegation attached great importance to the coordination of all the social and economic, environmental and legal components of development in national reform programmes. As a country with an economy in transition, Russia

(Mr. Pankin, Russian Federation)

recognized the need to integrate its economy into the international economic system, strengthen market institutions, ensure fair competition, encourage entrepreneurship and foster economic ties with the outside world. The Russian Federation's programme of measures to overcome the economic crisis set out the specific goals of the reforms and the stages for carrying them out, which would help stabilize the country's economy by the mid-1990s.

19. The United Nations had an important role to play in the implementation of the International Development Strategy; in particular, it should give priority to international economic cooperation. Greater emphasis should be placed on the study of the problems involved in the integration of the economies in transition into the world economy, the use of reliable means to ensure social stability during the structural adjustments period, the exchange of economically sound technologies, and population problems. It was important to strengthen United Nations operational activities, which made a significant contribution to the implementation of country projects and programmes and the coordination of the activities of the specialized agencies in that area. Measures should be taken to increase the efficiency of all the Organization's social and economic activities and to carry out the necessary reforms of its intergovernmental bodies and Secretariat structures.

20. Miss ZHANG Xiaoan (China) said that the developing countries had made tremendous efforts to implement the Declaration on International Economic Cooperation and the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade. They had carried out adjustment programmes and reforms and had taken measures to reduce tariff and non-tariff barriers, expand free trade, improve the investment environment and attract foreign capital. However, the external environment for the economic development of the developing countries had worsened. Terms of trade were deteriorating, protectionist practices were increasing, the Uruguay Round had thus far produced no results, the debt problem was far from being solved and official development assistance (ODA) was plummeting. In short, there was a huge discrepancy between the commitments that the international community had made and the action it had taken to implement the Declaration and the Strategy.

21. Her country hoped that the developed countries would realize that the revitalization and sustained development of the economies of the developing countries was in their own economic interests, and that they would take positive steps to support the efforts of the developing countries to revitalize their economies. In their efforts to strengthen macroeconomic coordination, the developed countries should help the developing countries settle problems in the areas of debt, commodities, capital flows, technology, trade and sustainable development; they should also fulfil their commitments under the Declaration and the Strategy.

22. The targets and plans defined in the Declaration and the Strategy were of great importance to international economic cooperation in the 1990s and should therefore serve as the basis of the agenda for development. The agenda for development should give full expression to the consensus reached by the international community and put forward positive recommendations with a view to achieving development targets and objectives.

23. Mr. PEDROSO (Cuba) noted that the international economic environment remained completely unfavourable to the economies of developing countries: negative resource flows persisted; official development assistance had not increased as had been expected; external debt and debt service remained a heavy burden on many developing economies while commodity prices continued to fall and the terms of trade to deteriorate. Nor did it look as if the new and additional resources necessary to assist developing countries in their transition towards sustainable development would be forthcoming. Given the stalemate reached at the Uruguay Round and the growing trend towards trading blocs, there was reason to wonder whether there was a genuine political will to embrace multilateralism. It was clear that the wishes of the South counted for little in international trade.

24. The structural adjustment policies had had adverse effects in that large segments of the population of developing countries had been reduced to abject poverty. In Latin America, weak growth had gone hand-in-hand with increasing inequality and declining standards of living.

25. The Declaration on International Economic Cooperation, the International Development Strategy and Agenda 21 contained all the necessary policy tools to eradicate poverty, disease, ignorance and suffering. The United Nations had a vital role to play in that area. Accordingly in considering the implementation of the commitments made in the major international instruments for economic development, special attention should be paid to practical follow-up measures taken by the United Nations in terms of programmes and resources. It was also important to maintain the priorities agreed by the member States for achieving those targets and objectives. Just as peace was important for development, so, too, was development important for peace. Equitable development in which priority was given to meeting the needs of the marginalized peoples of the developing countries would help guarantee peace and stability.

26. In conclusion, his delegation fully supported the statement made by the representative of Colombia on behalf of the Group of 77.

27. Mr. DEBABECHE (Algeria) said that his delegation fully supported the statement made by the representative of Colombia on behalf of the Group of 77. The modest progress achieved in the implementation of the Declaration on International Economic Cooperation and the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade fell far short of the objectives set by the international community. The developing countries had met their obligations, for they had undertaken bold economic and financial reforms focusing on free markets and the private sector, liberalization of their trading system and stabilization of financial and budgetary policy at considerable social cost to their people.

28. One of the understandings at the basis of both the Declaration on International Economic Cooperation and the International Development Strategy had been that the internal reforms which were the responsibility of developing countries, would be supported by the establishment of an international economic environment favourable to development and growth that would support their stabilization and adjustment policies. But the revitalization of growth in industrialized countries which should, in turn, have stimulated the economies of developing countries had not taken place, and it was more than likely that, in

(Mr. Debabeche, Algeria)

the immediate future, the Governments of those countries would focus more on solving their own problems than on those of developing countries. The slow-down in international trade had reinforced the tendency of industrialized countries to resort to protectionist measures, making access to their markets even more difficult for developing countries. The Uruguay Round of negotiations had reached a deadlock, making it very clear that little importance was attached to the concerns of third world countries and their desire for an open, transparent and non-discriminatory trading system.

29. While everyone acknowledged that adequate funding was essential for sustainable development, the difficulties that most developing countries encountered when seeking adequate financial flows had not diminished and official development assistance, both bilateral and multilateral, had declined. The difficulties encountered in connection with the tenth replenishment of the International Development Association (IDA) and the overall reduction in commitments for operational activities of the United Nations system testified to a general lack of interest.

30. Developed and developing countries must implement a cooperation policy based on reciprocal interests, common advantage and growing interdependence. Fair prices for commodities, an international trading system based on free competition and transparency and greater resource and investment flows were required in order to produce a swift solution.

31. Mr. KALANTARI (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that no serious attempt had yet been made to attain the goals established in the Declaration on International Economic Cooperation and the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade. A durable solution to the problem of external indebtedness was beyond the reach of many developing countries, whose ability to accelerate growth and eradicate poverty was therefore severely constrained. While the solutions to many critical problems facing the developing countries hinged on an open and just international trading system, ironically, those who prescribed a market-based economy for the South did not support the same approach at the international level. The prevailing uncertainty in the global economy had made the situation even worse. In an increasingly interdependent world, however, long-term economic growth and development in the North could not be achieved without participation by the South. If the post-cold war era was to be the age of international peace and economic cooperation, it must also address the economic problems in the South and work towards a global partnership.

32. As a first step, nations should cease to think in terms of their own self-interest, as though the interests of developing countries conflicted with those of the developed nations, and think in terms of partnership instead. The fundamental elements of international cooperation for global economic partnership between North and South were set forth in the International Development Strategy and the Declaration on International Economic Cooperation. The United Nations system could play a pivotal role in facilitating the implementation of their recommendations.

The meeting rose at 4.45 p.m.